

1911
J. M. W. W. W. W.
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To the Rev. William Bell.

SIR,—

YOU have again come under the influence of your besetting sin, *i. e.*, your anxiety to become an author is once more made manifest by the publication of another pastoral letter, in which Jesuitical production, under the mask of defending your character against the attacks of Mr. Stewart, you have thought proper to indulge in your natural propensity, of throwing out dark insinuations against persons, whom you dare not name in connection with any thing improper whether of a public or private nature. To reply to the foul calumnies, which you have on many occasions fulminated against several persons, whose characters stand far above the utmost reach of your malignant efforts, to level in the dust every vestage of their respectability, I should not consider on your own account. But lest the display which you bring forth in support of morality may induce the respectable congregation over which it has been your honor to preside, to suppose that you are the persecuted individual which your own gloomy fault-finding temper has imagined, I shall reluctantly trespass on their attention, in order to point out the impropriety of your proceedings, and to shew the groundless nature of that discontent with which you have frequently insulted your hearers, and profaned the Sabbath, by indulging in, and giving vent to violent and ungovernable passions in that very sanctuary where you have so often exhorted others to meekness, forbearance, and christian humility. But before taking notice of the letter you have just addressed to your Congregation, it may not be amiss to revert to a few of the outlines of your public proceedings since your arrival at this place. This becomes important, because it will enable me to contrast the professions you make and the zeal you would fain have it supposed you entertain for the blessings of all christian institutions, particularly the observance of the Sabbath, with your own frailties and failings, and before I have done with the subject, induce you, by viewing a correct likeness of your own weak nature, to utter in the sincerity of repentance the following prayer. "The mercy I to others shew, that mercy shew to me."

Perhaps it has not escaped your recollection, that upon your arrival here you stepped into a living of £100 Sterling per annum, that you received as further encouragement from Government, Eight hundred acres of valuable land near the town, besides one of the best twenty-five acre, or park lots, and two first rate town lots, all which, it was reasonably supposed, would have produced satisfaction and gratitude, particularly when you considered these solid advantages over the precarious charge of an inconsiderable school in the Highlands of Scotland. But was it so? it was not: so far from any such feeling being produced by the enjoyment of these comfortable circumstances, obvious in

your abode, in the dress and appearance of your family, in fact in every thing connected with you, it was almost your first public act to inform the settlers that they were bound to make further provision for your support, and in the most cold hearted indifference to their hardships and want, you cruelly insulted them by reproach, for not having built a house for your reception : little did you regard the recital of many difficulties which had obstructed their success, the failure of two crops with the consequent scarcity and all but starvation of their families, found no sympathy in your breast ; all these distresses were treated with utter disregard when adduced as reasons for non-compliance with your exorbitant demands—not long after you tauntingly told them you would leave the settlement to enjoy your salary elsewhere ; was this conduct befitting a servant, a missionary of him who said “ unless ye forsake husband and wife, children and lands, ye are not fit to follow me.” I think your hearers will answer no ! This unfeeling conduct together with various instances of a similar kind gave at that time much dissatisfaction, which even at this late day is not wholly eradicated—all your grumbling pecuniary applications and illnatured attacks were made on Sunday ! in the House of God !! always after divine service !!! and not unfrequently Sacramental service !!!! which in the expressed opinion of many pious members of your church is an awful breach of the Sabbath, even worse than the youthful folly of riding in a sleigh on that day. Do you remember the manner in which you attempted to pay honest Daniel Buchanan the debt you owed him for house rent ? & does not the award of the arbitrators rise up in judgment against you when you have the hardihood to exalt yourself as a pattern of “ Morality.” Was it revenge which prompted you to withhold baptism from the children of this old veteran in the service of him who gives you a hundred pounds sterling a year ? If so, I hope it will be forgiven you. But in every prayer you should remember with what scorn you refused to inform the old man how often he must attend your church before you would baptise his child, and that in consequence of such unchristian conduct, he was driven to the minister of another Church for the celebration of that ordinance of which our Saviour said, *Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not.* You did not “ set apart solely for religious purposes” that Sabbath evening which found you in the dwelling of a neighbouring Justice of the Peace demanding a warrant under the *Black act* against a young lad named Joseph Pitt, who had accidentally injured your Cow by the discharge of a fowling piece, and you did not “ remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” when your anger waxed warm because the Justice told you he did not see the necessity for issuing a warrant on that day, as he thought Monday morning would answer as well : but if you would swear that you had reason to believe that Pitt would leave the place that night, he would examine the law and grant the Warrant. This sound advice had no effect on your meek and forgiving mind, for I have heard that you posted off the same evening to another Magistrate who also refused to break the Sabbath by complying with your oppressive demands ; that the young man’s father willingly paid the value of the Cow but never forgot your cruel attempt to banish his son to Botany Bay, must come within your recollection. The next conspicuous part of your hypocritical Drama is a volume published by you on the subject of emigration. Its real character

was forcibly exhibited by one of the Montreal Editors, whom you threatened to prosecute for defamation, but wisely forbore doing so. The whole work, in the opinion of people on this side of the Atlantic, was insipid misrepresentation, and to prove this condemnatory sentence I need only point out the ungrateful description which you so jeeringly gave of hospitality bestowed on yourself and family by a Clergyman at the Pentland Firth.

I will not trespass on the time of the reader, by giving a detail of all the particular instances, wherein your overbearing and malicious disposition has been exercised to the annoyance of your neighbours and congregation; for the subject is quite proverbial among them, and while they live, they cannot forget how often from the Pulpit you have forgotten the solemnities of the day, and at the close of the Service indulged in vituperation and invective ill becoming a Minister of the Gospel, and altogether unseemly in a place of public worship. On one occasion so violent were your passions, that you sat down without desiring the people to join in praising God; on another, when quarrelling with retiring Elders, you violently threatened to leave the settlement, if they did not furnish you with certain reasons. These are but a few of numerous violations of the Sabbath, which you have publicly committed, and which compel others to think, that you ought to cast the beam out of your own eye, before you attempt, with such violence, to pluck the mote from your brother's. However as I have little inclination to follow you through all the disputes in which you have been involved, or to do more than notice your indulgence in tale-bearing, and receiving the kitchen tattle of the whole neighbourhood, I will pass over to a recent period, when your restless spirit was again brought into dishonourable action: I mean the wrath you manifested when you heard that some respectable persons saw fit to propose a Subscription for the support of a Clergyman of the Church of Scotland. Are you not aware that a very large portion of the Presbyterians of Bathurst and Drummond, in consequence of your unpleasant temper and tyrannical conduct, are dissatisfied with your ministrations, and earnestly desire the labours of another Clergyman, and do you think it is your duty to oppose, in the manner you do, so reasonable an anxiety? especially as their contributions, in no shape whatever, can interfere with your living, and when it is notorious, that the Presbyterian cause is daily suffering material injury for want of an active Minister to preach in the remote parts of the District, which you are perfectly sensible are never favoured with the services of a Clergyman at that persuasion. The Episcopalian and Methodist ministers are actively employed in every part of the Settlement, and the numerous Presbyterian proselytes who are said to have joined their standard, point out the strongest censure on your clerical labours, confined as they generally are to a sermon in the village once a week. True you have of late gone a few miles into the country, where there is little occasion for any one, as the people are within reach of the Church. But in vindication of your strenuous exertions to prevent the spread of Presbyterianism in this neighbourhood, let the public know how often you have preached beyond eight miles from home during the last five years, and name the different places.

The only reasonable objection which I have ever been able to discover

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as grounds for your attempts to prevent the introduction of another Minister here, is the certainty that many of your hearers will leave you if the other is a popular preacher, and an amiable pious man. Already a considerable number of them have subscribed for his support, and should he answer this description, others stand ready to follow their example. But these circumstances cannot in reality be considered injurious to the cause of Religion, as they will naturally tend to produce double activity, and agreeable deportment on your part, essentials long wanted, and which have forced the application for another Clergyman,

And now Sir, having pointed out a few of your own faults, in order to shew how necessary it is that a public censor should himself act uprightly, and before he commences a newspaper war with his neighbours remember, that his own "morality" lives in a house of glass and may be broken by every scribbler who can throw a stone, I will just notice a few of the prominent improprieties of your "Pastoral letter No. 2" and then take leave of you, in the hope that experience will lead you to adopt a course of conduct better calculated to answer the object of your residence in this place. I first observe that your remarks on the duty of Magistrates together with your eulogiums on the Government and the insertion of His Majesty's Proclamation, are evidently intended to bring into disrepute the many respectable individuals, whose names are in the commission of the peace of this District, and notwithstanding the opinion of the Grand Jury at the last Quarter Sessions, whose unanimous Vote of thanks to a "Friend of Morality" appears to please you so much, they (the Magistrates) Generally have the peace, order, and morality of the settlement quite as much at heart as yourself, notwithstanding of the censure you cast on those who profane the Sabbath by devoting that holy day to "*business, travelling, or pleasure.*" Who could suppose, after reading the first page of your pious petition signed "Sabbath Day" that any individual under the roof of a person of your infallible sanctity could have profaned the Lord's Day, by *business, or travelling*, but look back virtuous Sir, and remember the departure of one of your sons from the good example of your paternal home to "*entrance into business*" and say, if that was not a Sabbath Day. Remember also the return of the other son to co-operate in the same *business*, and contradict, if you can, my assertion, that, that also was a Sabbath Day, and one on which you administered the Sacrament! and more, that his passage through the town in "*travelling*" costume with Portmanteau &c. was during divine Service. Notices should not have been taken of these circumstances by me but for my firm persuasion of the truth of what you often inculcate, *that example is better than precept*—and had you not triumphantly asked "*what have they done*" as if all were bad but your own. I am sure their names would not be brought into observation by any one, if you were not so unreasonably severe against other persons committing similar offences. But were I disposed to accept your challenge, and shew the faults of *your sons* as you delight to do those of others, I could have little reason to hope, that the attempt would meet with more credence, on your part, than you gave when they were proved to have grossly injured a Lady of this Town, and when in stead of supporting the Session in their proceedings against

the youngmen, you Arbitrarily set at nought their sentence of suspension from the communion, and by your conduct, virtually declared them innocent in the face of absolute proof. So would it be were I to mention many facts of public notoriety. But I have no desire. The people generally have no wish to notice their indiscretions, did their Father or not unfeelingly insult the parents of other young people, by seeking every opportunity to trumpet a thoughtless error to the world. And had you from the pulpit admonished the giddy young persons who thoughtlessly transgressed the laws of the Almighty, by sleigh riding on the Sabbath, and after denouncing in the severest manner the crime of converting that day into a day of pleasure and amusement, take occasion to whisper that sweet balm, that holy tenderness that supports and heals the troubled soul, & then directed their young minds to the rock of faith where the anchor of the soul will hold fast to ensure the voyage to a future and a better world, I say Sir, had you done this, which was your bounden duty, in place of writing a highly accrimonious article in a newspaper, the public would have acknowledged the obligation, and all the disputes and prosecutions resulting therefrom would have been avoided.

- " I venerate the man, whose heart is warm,
- " Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life
- " Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
- " That he is honest in the sacred cause ;
- " To such I render more than mere respect,
- " Whose actions say, that they respect themselves--
affectionate in look,
- " And tender in address, as well becomes
- " A messenger of grace to guilty men.
- " Behold the picture !—is it like ? Like whom ?"

COWPER.

Perhaps your remarks with regard to your sons at this time had less in view of a moral than commercial nature, for the language looks much more like a mercantile puff than any thing else. How far such attempts accord with the spirit of a Pastoral letter I leave for your Congregation to decide. I shall not now consider the dispute between you and Mr. Stewart, having no wish to prejudice the public mind on a matter which will shortly become the subject of judicial investigation. However I cannot shut my eyes against your palpable endeavours to interfere the Executive, the Bench, and the Jury in your favour, and it is certainly laughable to see you lauding a Government beyond whose dominions you not long since proposed removing your domicile, and it is a high farce to hear a "Friend to Morality" boast of the unanimous vote of the Grand Jury at the last Quarter Sessions, he ought at the same time to have named two or three of the Jurors as eminently well qualified to give lectures on MORALITY.

Before the people of the Country can believe that the Magistrates and other respectable persons here, "persecute and prosecute" you, they will enquire how other Gospel ministers are treated, and when they learn that all the other Clergymen evince quite as much zeal in the cause of their Divine master as you can have any pretensions to,

without cause of complaint. on the contrary highly satisfied with the Countenance received from the authorities, is it not likely that the opinion will readily be received, that the difficulties of which you complain are of your own creating.

I shall now take my leave of you for the present, but not in your own uncharitable spirit, by hoping you will fall into the pit which you have dug for your enemies, but by advising you to forgive them who despitefully use you.

A PRESBYTERIAN.